



CATAWBA COUNTY

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CATAWBA COUNTY TO OPEN THIRD PARK ON DECEMBER 12

Official grand opening for St. Stephens Park will be held in spring of 2009

Catawba County's Parks Division will open its third park on Friday, December 12, 2008, when St Stephens Park, formerly a part of the City of Hickory's system, reopens for the first time since it was closed in 2005. The 9.1-acre park is located at 2247 36th Ave NE, behind Clyde Campbell Elementary School off Kool Park Road at the dead end of 36th Ave NE in Hickory.

"Amenities at the new facility include a one-acre dog park, a 1/3 mile gravel surfaced walking trail, playground, horseshoe pits, picnic shelter and meeting room," said Blair Rayfield, Catawba County's Parks Manager. "A bird feeding station will also be available for up close viewing of songbirds and hummingbirds."



The park was funded through an appropriation of \$180,000 from the County's Parks Trust Fund, which was first established in fiscal year 1997. It joins Bakers Mountain Park and Riverbend Park in the County's Park System. The Catawba County Board of Commissioners appropriated an additional \$30,000 from the Parks Trust Fund in October 2008 to address dramatic increases in construction costs.

County staff constructed a trail, required under a Land and Water Conservation Fund grant that funded the original opening of the park in 1979, and staff also renovated an existing playground area and will install educational landscaping over time, reducing the overall cost to renovate and reopen the park.

St. Stephens Park will operate on a four day schedule each week, being open on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays. Hours of operation will be from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm from November through February; 8:00 am to 7:00 pm in March; 8:00 am to 8:00 pm from April through September; and 8:00 am to 7:00 pm in October. A ranger will be on duty during all park hours. The park will be closed on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.

"We anticipate that the dog park will be a very popular part of the renovated St. Stephens Park due to its location in a densely populated area of the county and close proximity to the City of Hickory," Rayfield said. "Dog owners must obtain a permit for all dogs using the enclosed dog park. Permits are available for \$20 per year, per dog and will be valid at both the St. Stephens and Riverbend Park dog parks. Dogs must be current on all vaccinations including rabies, DHLLP, and bordetella. A current copy of a dog's veterinarian records is necessary to obtain a permit."

To obtain a dog park permit, you may download an application from the Catawba County website at: <http://www.catawbacountync.gov/depts/parks/DogParkApp.pdf>

For further information, you may contact the St Stephens Park office number at (828) 441-7277, or Blair Rayfield, Catawba County Parks Manager at (828) 312-4803.

"Keeping the Spirit Alive Since 1842!"